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# **Keeping Taonga Warm:**

**Aotearoa New Zealand's**

**Museums**

**and**

**Maori *Tapu* Material.**

A Thesis presented in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts in Anthropology.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is an interpretative viewpoint from a Aotearoa New Zealand *tauiwi*, of the importance of the spiritual meaning of *taonga* and their related concepts of *tapu*, *mana* and *wairua* to Maori, both in the past and today.

It is concerned primarily with how *taonga* and their *tapu* nature have been addressed by Aotearoa New Zealand's museums, historically and contemporarily, and by the anthropologists and archaeologists and ethnologists working within them. While related issues include all indigenous secret and sacred material, both tangible and intangible, I am primarily interested in how museum professionals, especially anthropologists and archaeologists working within New Zealand Museums, have incorporated the concept of *tapu* into their engagement with Maori *taonga*, and how they resolve their own beliefs with those of Maori. I am specifically concerned with how Maori *taonga* are kept spiritually 'warm,' by non-Maori museum personnel concerned with their physical care. This involves an analysis of museum traditions and past historical influences now affecting Aotearoa New Zealand today.

This discussion begins with an explanation of the author's ontological viewpoint and reasons for writing this, and sets the terms of reference for the following discussions.

Chapter One examines of the meaning of *tapu*, *taonga* and their related concepts, the way in which early writers and ethnologists have dealt with this subject historically, and the impact that this had on the current museological climate as well as interpretations by current writers including Maori and anthropologists.

Chapter Two shows how scientific interests took precedence over Maori *tapu* concerns in early museum practice, both in collecting habits, display and in the interpretation of Maori *tikanga*, by ethnologists and museum management.

Chapter Three discusses the recent changes in the management of some Aotearoa New Zealand's museums, the effect of professional guidelines and specific pieces of legislation on both Maori and museums, nationally and internationally. Recent changes include bicultural management within some museum management structures, *iwi* liaison committees within others, and current Maori initiatives in respect to the management of *koiwi tangata*.

Chapter Four examines the impact that the changing attitudes towards Maori issues by non-Maori staff have had in Aotearoa New Zealand's Museums, regarding Maori access to *taonga*, the handling of *taonga* by non-museum staff, conservation issues and what the situation is today and where it is going.

In the Conclusion I argue that, rather than a growth in understanding of Maori concerns regarding the care of and access to *taonga* held in Aotearoa New Zealand's museums, and of their *tapu* regulations, and the implications of these to the current well-being of specific *iwi*, a process of 'managerialization' of *tapu* concerns has been instigated in all major museums in Aotearoa New Zealand, and with some variations, within some other smaller ones. This has resulted in the decision making passing into the hands of *iwi* or joint management committees, whereby individual curators, collection managers and ethnologists no longer need to understand these issues deeply.

Finally, I emphasise that only museums who actively pursue a co-operative relationship with their local *iwi* or *marae* will be visited by the local Maori community and continue to be allowed to continue to care for these important links from the past with the Maori of today. This should involve a repatriation of stolen *taonga*, *koiwi tangata* and *mokomokai* and retraining of museum staff in *tikanga* and Maori issues. It is not enough to 'pass the buck' and ignore the issues involved.

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overshadowed by a more vocal iwi in their own ancestral *rohe*, but who are an inspiration for all of us who know you.

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis came into being because of a fortuitous meeting I had several years ago with Patricia and Vivienne, two Maori sisters in the midst of a Wai claim before the Waitangi Tribunal for land at Ohakune, originally named Makotuku. These sisters are descended from Ngati Uenuku, Ngati Tara, Ngati Hekeawai and Ngati Apa and regard Ruapehu as their *maunga* since their ancestor was once proud owner of all he could see from one side.

These two strong women, strong in their *wairua*, standing alone for their *hapu*, without visible male support, believe that they are “not strong” in their *tikanga*, since they are not native speakers of Te Reo Maori. Yet the visible presence in Patricia’s house of rocks from her ancestral *rohe*, and *harakeke* weavings in various stages of completion, make walking into her house seem like walking onto an ancient *marae*. Always open to visitors, Patricia refuses to fix up her well worn home, to remind her and her *tamariki* of the “old people,” whose interests they guard. Her intent is to provide a place to stand, and to build a *marae* where all their people can gather. As Patricia says “it is for the love of our *tupuna* and generations to come.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Patricia told me how her “old” people came from the beliefs of the old Maori way to follow Ratana, and this is why they no longer have any *taonga* as heirlooms, since they were all deposited in the Ratana museum as relics of the past. She

particularly lamented the loss of the *pou*, which had stood outside her people's *whare*, and served as a focus for daily conversing with the *atua*. When I first discussed writing this thesis with Patricia, I was fascinated with sacred secret knowledge and the concept of the *whare wananga*, but had no awareness of the importance of *tapu*. At the time she wisely looked at me and cryptically answered, "There is always one woman who will break *tapu* to get her degree."<sup>(2)</sup>

When Patricia spoke her wise words I realized that I had no clear concept of *tapu*, and I could easily violate her trust unknowingly, through my inquisitive nature and anthropological inquiries. I was reminded of an unrelated occasion where a dinner guest of the host was a Maori *tohunga*, who was sitting near me. As he was also an Anglican Minister I was unaware that, despite his Christianity, his Maori self was of equal, if not more, importance. The conversation was focused on Maori spirituality and moved on to *wahi tapu*, and I made a comment regarding a *whare wananga* that had burnt down around the turn of the century, that I was familiar with, and asked him if he knew of it. His reaction towards my inquisitive question left me in no doubt that I had violated an unwritten code I was previously unaware of. The conversation abruptly changed, and I was reprimanded later by an observer who noted his discomfort. I was told that this subject was *tapu*, and I was left to wonder why. Yet despite my own belief system, years of religious studies, anthropological inquiry, museum studies and Maori studies, it took the writing of this thesis to understand what exactly I had violated.

Now I understand that not only was the ‘place’ of the *whare wananga tapu*, as well as the ‘subject,’ but we were still sitting at the table we had eaten at. We were combining food with sacred knowledge. Also, as a woman, I would not have been privy to such knowledge in the past, and even now would most likely not be, if I were Maori and not *tauiwi*. While I am now embarrassed to admit such clumsy ignorance, the lesson has been learnt and noted. My present understanding that I insulted him that day reminds me of the uncomfortable electric current in the air as I spoke. I might forget one but not the other. This was my first lesson in the way *tapu* works.

My second lesson resulted in two dual revelations. An ex-partner that I had once lived with in the Hokianga *rohe*, insisted on our parting that I keep the stone *patu* he had found nearby our camp site. While I was delighted with the gift, since I have a fascination with anything ancient, particularly made of stone, I had always felt strange when I held it, not only because it was, in my view, stolen from the people who it really belonged to, but I suspected that it had been used in warfare and had the blood of others on its stone. I was at the time unaware that, if so, it would have been *tapu* and definitely should not have been handled by a woman. In addition, as I was later to find out, it also violated the ‘Antiquities Act 1975,’ since it was found the year after.<sup>(3)</sup>

Several years later I attended a lecture by a Native American Elder of the Ojibwa people called John Two Birds. On meeting him again later I had a profound spiritual experience in his presence, which resulted in me becoming one of his

apprentices. Later, during a medicine lodge ceremony, I had a vision of the *patu* begging to be united with ‘his’ people, so soon after I took the *patu* home back to the Hokianga and gave it to someone whose memory came to me in the lodge. I’d always thought that this dignified Maori man who had lived near us then, was a wise *kaumatua*, and it didn’t surprise me that he opened the door with a smile and asked me how I was, as if he was expecting me. Then he took the *patu* in the *harakeke kete* I had made for it, without looking at it. I said that I believed he would know what to do with it and he said yes, he did. I felt a sense of relief on the way home, and was light hearted and cheerful for months. I recognized it as a lesson in the power of the *tapu* of Maori artefacts.

During this time, while searching for information through the internet on *wahi tapu*, I came across an article that was to change the course of my research and of my future life. Makere Harawira, in a criticism entitled “Neo-Imperialism and the (mis) appropriation of Indigenusness,” touched on two subjects which I had a profound interest in. Firstly, he referred to the publication of the ‘Song of the Waitaha’ by Barry Brailsford, and how Brailsford had then moved on to form Stone Print Books, take lecture tours, walk greenstone trails and (mis)appropriate Waitaha teachings and confidences.<sup>(4)</sup> I had recently attended a lecture by the renowned man, but was uncomfortable with the homage and position of great honour given to him, as he talked of star-beings and great secret knowledge. It made me analyse my apprenticeship with John Two Birds and my reasons for following the Native American way.

Secondly, Harawira referred to the subject of cultural ‘appropriation,’ and the harm it does to native peoples. When John Two Birds unexpectedly, because of personal reasons, released his apprentices, some of my fellow ‘sisters’ and ‘brothers’ transferred their apprenticeship to a more senior follower. I understood then that, while the direct line between John and myself was a genuine connection, a secondary connection through someone else was not. This came within the domain of ‘cultural appropriation,’ which members of the ‘Dakota, Lakota and Nokota Nations’ speak out against.<sup>(5)</sup> This is also what Harawira was accusing Barry Brailsford of doing. While Brailsford had initial permission to publish one book by the keepers of the knowledge who had entrusted him with it, he then abused their trust when he went on a path of his own. So, while I now continue to honour the lessons I learnt from John Two Birds and walk on the ‘Red Road’ as he taught me, I am apprenticed to no one, and I have resolved to avoid using the sacred knowledge I have acquired from both Maori and Native American research, for gain of my own, but to help me understand the lessons I have learnt. Thus my own experiences have contributed towards a profound interest in the issue of what constitutes cultural appropriation, and, where indigenous material culture is in the hands of non-indigenous people, what the implications are for both of them. This was the second revelation resulting from my experience in the medicine lodge. This was a lesson in the *tapu* of sacred knowledge.

Hence this thesis is not an another ‘*pakeha*’ attempt to re-interpret Maori spiritual culture. Nor is it intended to “sustain one group and disempower another,”<sup>(6)</sup> by

appropriating another people's cultural practices." Instead it is an honest response to the challenge set up by Dr. Ngahuia Te Awe Kotuku to investigate the issues she raises regarding New Zealand's obligations to Article Two of The Treaty of Waitangi.<sup>(7)</sup> This guarantees:

full and exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands and Estates, Forests, Fisheries, and *other properties* which they may collectively or individually possess so long as it is their wish and desire to retain the same in their possession.<sup>(8)</sup>

Of direct relevance to museums, and the right of indigenous peoples to retain these *other properties*, is the 1993 'United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,' Article 12, which includes:

the right to practice and revitalise cultural traditions and customs, *the right to restitution of cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free and informed consent*, and the right to ensure that indigenous sacred places, including burial sites, be preserved, respected and protected.<sup>(9)</sup>

Both of these pieces of legislation suggest issues regarding the loss of ownership by many Maori of their *taonga*, such as *whakairo* and other objects which are now residing in museums, how they have been treated, how they are now being cared for, and the right to claim them back. Despite these stated rights, issues of ownership are proving notoriously hard to solve, as the many years that the Bay of Plenty people had to wait before having the Mataatua *wharenui* returned to them

illustrates. So too are issues of museum conservation versus the desire of Maori to use their tribal *taonga* for life-cycle ceremonies, such as *tangi* and commemorative occasions.

Despite Article Two of the ‘Treaty of Waitangi’ many *taonga* arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand’s museums through unknown means, some gifted, some found, some stolen and some brought from Maori without the approval of the collective kin-group, *whanau*, *hapu* or *iwi*. Regardless of issues of ‘Who Owns the Past?’,<sup>(10)</sup> access to *taonga* in Aotearoa New Zealand’s museums by Maori is an ethical obligation, which museums should provide today if they are mindful of the terms of the treaty and of the 1993 ‘United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.’ This is the physical aspect of caring for *taonga*, but what of the spiritual?

Elsdon Best reports how in 1853 the Taranaki Maori, who were diminishing in numbers, due to “introduced diseases and changes in habits and beliefs,”... “believed that it was their abandonment of *tapu* that was the cause of their misfortunes,” since old *tapu* objects and places, capable of rendering them harm, were still amongst them and not given respect.<sup>(11)</sup> Ceremonies were conducted to render *noa*, or free from *tapu*, objects and places, such as the buried material *mauri* of deserted *pa*. While the Taranaki Maori apparently neutralised their most powerful objects and places it is unlikely that all *iwi* did, and if not, what are the implications for museums today? Do these objects continue to have an affect on

the people handling them, on the museums concerned, on the ‘*pakeha*’ generally?  
Do they have a detrimental effect on Aotearoa New Zealand?

To most Maori, unless alienated from their kin group, *taonga* contain a *wairua*, an ancestral spirit or a life force of their own, and people are protected from their power by *tapu* restrictions, traditionally defined by *tohunga* and now upheld by *kaitiaki*, in some museums. Since the “past is viewed as part of the living present” then all Maori pre-European artefacts are sacred to Maori people today, because of their implications for their continuation as a people and the connection with their heritage, as well as the *mana* that comes with their associations with those pre-contact times.<sup>(12)</sup> This does not mean however that all Maori artefacts are considered beneficial, since, as Patricia explained, many Maori will not enter museums today because of the *tapu* nature of some Maori objects stored within them. “They won’t go there because people who come into contact with them are now *makutu*, and affected by witchcraft.”<sup>(13)</sup>

Many non-Maori anthropologists, archaeologists, trained curators and untrained volunteers working within Aotearoa New Zealand’s museums handle important Maori *taonga* in the course of their daily work. For some their university training, interest in Maori *tikanga*, friends and colleagues in the museum field, and participation in *hui* and *korero* with Maori elders, all contribute to their body of knowledge of Maori *tikanga*. Others simply perform their daily tasks and give little thought to the implications of their actions for the *taonga* and the Maori of today.



Hypothetically speaking, from the perspective of an anthropologist, if the power of *tapu* does not depend on a belief in *tapu*, and if *tapu* is as potent as believed, then our museums today and the islands of Aotearoa New Zealand are full of objects which are capable of rendering harm to people who disrespect them. For instance, women did not handle weapons of war and yet many museum curators and collection managers are women, and handle these in their daily work. The application of *tapu* applies equally to knowledge, previously the domain of the *whare wananga*. For instance, Elsdon Best discusses an “exceedingly *tapu* chant of the ‘cult’ of Io connected with the ceremonial initiation of [a] Matakite [or] seer.”<sup>(14)</sup> Since Best collected all manner of chants, myths, and stories, if a particular chant was written down and then recited in a disrespectful manner by someone without awareness of what they were saying, can it cause harm to that person, or worse, to others? More importantly is it worth the risk?

These questions also apply to Maori items in museum which are not considered significant. I personally know of one museum, at which I have worked at, where Maori items not on display are stored in the only spare room, a room which also serves as thoroughfare, office, workroom and lunch room. This is common practice in many small museums who have a space problem and no disrespect is intended on the part of the non-Maori personnel. Hands are washed before handling Maori items, although it is usually only because of conservation awareness, but food is eaten in the same area without thinking about possible outcomes. To most Maori this would simply not occur, but many non-Maori,

even those normally culturally sensitive to Maori *tikanga*, wouldn't give it a second thought.

While *taonga* displayed and stored within museums are generally acknowledged as of a spiritual nature by museum staff, many non-Maori staff don't truly believe that they contain a *wairua* or life force or treat them as such. Non-Maori staff seldom display the same attitude of *wehi, ahi or wana*, the fear, awe and respect for the objects under their care, that a Maori curator would exhibit. A standard anthropological and museum approach is to suspend a disbelief of the power and energy of artefacts such as *taonga*, by pretending not to disbelieve, in order to accept another person's belief.<sup>(15)</sup> If museum workers truly understood or believed in the *wairua* of these *taonga* they would acknowledge that such objects need contact with their people as much as their people need contact with them.

Stephen O'Regan emphasized that the "primary value of *taonga* derives from its association with particular ancestors - the *whakapapa* - and their histories," and that the "incorrect treatment of the associated *whakapapa* and history" can cause anger and dismay to tribal elders.<sup>(16)</sup> Many museums encase large objects, such as a stone *rongo* or similar, within a glass case, allegedly for their own protection but in effect restricting the physical contact between local ancestral *iwi* and their *atua*. Apart from "the physical barriers of distance and glass cases," "foreign labels and bureaucratic hierarchies ... recontextualise them [the *taonga*] in Western culture" giving them legal, monetary and insurance values.<sup>(17)</sup> *Iwi* concerns are sometimes acknowledged with the presence of a bowl of water for

washing their hands, but the understanding that such objects desire to be touched by their people and of the desire of their people to touch them, is ignored, since it is contrary to conservation practice. Ignored also is the spiritual knowledge that such *taonga* can never truly be owned by anyone.<sup>(18)</sup> What then does the incorrect treatment of these *taonga* in museums create for Maori-Pakeha relationships?

If you are thinking that this is only the view of some ‘wacky’ psuedo-spiritual *pakeha*, consider for a moment that at least one other non-Maori museum professional has found herself questioning the same issues. Carol O’Biso, Registrar for the American Federation of Arts, had many reasons to seriously consider the power of important *taonga* when packing, accompanying and installing the exhibitions in the United States for ‘Te Maori’ in the 1980s. In her book about her experiences, *First Light*, she tells of how a stone sculpture owned by the Maori Queen refused to be photographed on many occasions,<sup>(19)</sup> how O’Biso’s stomach hurt when the load shifted in the truck behind her, and ‘he’ was rubbing against the case,<sup>(20)</sup> of how indentations in the back of a large carved meeting house front piece, caused by display mounts, mysteriously disappeared,<sup>(21)</sup> of how drills wouldn’t work when an unnoticed mount was loose on the bottom of a large wooden figure,<sup>(22)</sup> and how the lights of the trucks transporting the *taonga* failed at dawn but came back on at night.<sup>(23)</sup> Also the United States ‘handlers,’ who were moving the *taonga*, were amazed when she told them that the largest piece, which took twenty-eight of their men to carry, was carried by only eight Maori men in New Zealand.<sup>(24)</sup> She admitted also that

her experiences during 'Te Maori,' and the people she met, changed the course of her life and opened her eyes to a different way of looking at objects.(25)

O'Biso was asked by a friend: "Is it only Maori artefacts?" She replied:

Well right now it seems to be focused on Maori artefacts but I think that's only because these pieces have come from a living culture of people who still believe in them. I don't think the Egyptian pieces, or the Northwest Coast American Indian material or any art I've worked with, has had any less power or meant any less to the people who made it. It's just that no one has listened to those in along time.

They've been too long separated from anyone who will let them speak (26)

No one, however, has reported mysterious happenings around *taonga* in Aotearoa New Zealand museums. It may be because they are on their home ground and have no need to, but could it also be because they are being denied their right to 'speak' here, by a lack of contact with their people?

Hubert asked: "Is it, in fact, possible for people who have different religious beliefs, really to believe in the sacredness of the sites and objects that are part of another religion?" While O'Biso and I might say yes, the prevalence of ethnocentrism and prejudice displayed by non-indigenous people in post-contact societies towards indigenous beliefs, combined with 'Western' logic, would have to suggest no. If not, then, "what do we mean when we say that we believe in the sacredness of someone else's site? How far can we really believe in the

sacredness of sites which relate to beliefs that we do not share? Can we say that something is sacred to someone else but not to us? Is that not the same as saying that it is not sacred?”<sup>(27)</sup> Logic and honesty would have to say yes.

To further erode our comfortable compromise Hubert asked: “Could it be, on the other hand, that what is sacred to one person is in essence sacred?” From the viewpoint of suspended disbelief on the part of the current guardian on the one hand, and the loss of control of a sacred item from the descendants on the other, it is pertinent to ask: “If we treat something as sacred, is that enough?”<sup>(28)</sup> In the Aotearoa New Zealand situation, is a suspension of disbelief for the purposes of respecting another’s belief sufficient to neutralise *tapu* objects which have not been made *noa*, through oversight or dislocation from their original peoples? Also, do all museums respect these powerful objects in the manner in which they would be treated if a Maori museum worker was in control of their storage or display? Obviously not. What about transgressions made through ignorance? In practice however, it is irrelevant whether or not items are *tapu* or *noa*, they are sacred to Maori and if *taonga* are accepted as sacred then they would be treated in the appropriate manner, not as a non-Maori would treat their own sacred objects, but as Maori would treat them. Sadly this does not often occur.

Sacredness, as explained by Hubert, is a Latin term and “is defined as restriction through pertaining to the gods.”<sup>(29)</sup> In the Western tradition this means that the sacred object, person, or site, is given special significance with rules and restrictions and set apart from everyday use. She noted how it has only recently

been recognised that concepts of sacredness are different for all people and unique to individual peoples. Also, unlike in the Western traditions, spirituality for Maori was and still is for many, a part of everyday life, where sacred objects were not placed apart from the people or the land, but live amongst them, although often hidden. Although there was “no direct equivalence to sacredness in New Zealand Maori,”<sup>(30)</sup> as Mauss explained, the concept of sacred “is inherent in the notion of *mana* and derives from it,” since the concept of *mana* is more general than that of sacred.<sup>(31)</sup>

Yet while spirituality for pre-European Maori was, and still is for many, a part of everyday life, in post-‘Treaty of Waitangi’ Aotearoa New Zealand, many treasured items have become alienated from the Maori people who created them, and from the people who recognise their *mana* or *tapu* nature. With the coming of Christianity, *tapu*, according to R.S.Oppenheim, “came to be interpreted as sacredness,”<sup>(32)</sup> supporting Prytz Johansen’s view that “the *tapu* of rituals... can reasonably be called sacred, we may translate *tapu* by ‘sacred.’<sup>(33)</sup> However for the purposes of this thesis it is helpful to view the concept of sacredness in Mauss’ terms, as inherent in all treasured aspects of life, all treasured items or *taonga*, and all treasured sites or *wahi tapu*, and in people, which Maori themselves consider to be sacred. It is not intended to imply a dualism in pre-European Maori culture, or a separation into secular and sacred.

Because no discussion regarding Maori issues, by a non-Maori person, can avoid political implications, I have been careful to avoid terms which I consider to be

negative statements between two people. Specifically I have avoided using the term '*pakeha*' and instead speak about non-Maori or *tauiwi*, unless it is relevant, or a direct political statement. This is because '*pakeha*' was a term applied to the new settlers in the nineteenth century, but is often assumed to be a derogatory term, by many contemporary non-Maori, whatever its original meaning, and it is sometimes said in a derogatory way by Maori.<sup>(34)</sup> In contrast, *tauiwi*, meaning "strange tribe," or "foreign race," does not seem have acquired the same negative connotations.<sup>(35)</sup> As a fourth generation Aotearoa New Zealander of mixed Celtic descent, (Scottish, Irish, Welsh and Cornish), with my children born here, I consider myself to be as much a part of this land as do the Maori people. This is 'my' political statement that, while I *am* from a "strange" tribe, I now belong here, there is nowhere for me to go back to, and I look to no foreign soil as home.

Secondly, because of my respect for the Maori people and their language, I acknowledge that while I too belong here, the Maori and the Moriori were here on these islands before my people. Thus this land is Aotearoa, as they named it. However it is also post-colonial New Zealand and has undergone major changes, and so I refer to it as Aotearoa when speaking about pre-'Treaty of Waitangi' times, New Zealand when speaking of early colonial days and of the early government, and Aotearoa New Zealand when speaking about government and museums in the latter part of the twentieth century, after Maori and English were declared official languages. Both political statements are intended to foster understanding and not dissent.

Readers will notice that lower case Maori words are written in italics. These words, which are unfamiliar to many non-Maori, can be found in a 'Maori Glossary' at the end of the 'Conclusion.' For the sake of readability, commonly used Maori words or Maori names, both personal and collective, are not italicised. In one sense, this use of italics is also a political statement, intended to bring awareness that despite 150 years of colonisation many non-Maori are still unfamiliar with the Maori language.

In order to understand the ethics of anthropologists, archaeologists and other trained museum personnel, working within New Zealand Museums and engaging with Maori material, I have used both primary and secondary sources in my methodology. I have combined both historical and contemporary literature and undertaken interviews with personnel in relevant museums. My methodology begins with this 'Introduction,' explaining why I have undertaken this research, the issues under discussion, a general analysis of what I perceive to be the attitude in museums today, and a definition of terms of reference used. Chapter One, 'Anthropological Interpretations of Tapu,' firstly examines the literary representation of Maori *tapu* by early New Zealand explorers, missionaries and settlers, then the early ethnographers/anthropologists of the later nineteenth and early twentieth century and finally later writers, including both Maori and non-Maori. Wherever possible an explanation of their ontological viewpoint is given and comparisons are made with each other. The second chapter also investigates literary sources, using them to analyse the conflict between science and *tapu* in 'Early New Zealand Museum Practice.' A summary of the major people involved



in the development of Aotearoa New Zealand's museums is given, as well as several case studies to illustrate the way museums enhanced their collections to the detriment of the Maori people.

The third and fourth chapters are based on contemporary sources, including both literature and interviews, to examine current practices by management and non-Maori anthropologists, archaeologists and curators working with Maori material. This involved interviews with some of these specialists at their home museums in order to understand their position and concerns and current attitudes to *tapu* issues, as well as drawing on my own experiences while working in South Island museums. 'Chapter Three' examines the growing 'managerialization of *tapu* concerns' and of *taonga* management, as decision making for these concerns is coming increasingly under the domain of local Maori committees and/or Museum Management. 'Chapter Four' considers access to *taonga*, the ritual handling of objects by museum personnel and future directions for the museums discussed. In the conclusion I give my view of how I see the future of museums for Aotearoa New Zealand, and of Maori-Pakeha relations, developing.

In the process of writing this, I have chosen not to interview Maori museum staff, because this thesis is not speaking for Maori people, but for non-Maori museum personnel, especially those with anthropological and archaeological and backgrounds, engaging with Maori *tapu* material, with which I identify. However, as some excellent studies have been written recently by Maori staff, both published and unpublished, I have included their material where appropriate.

Finally, it is my sincere hope that this study will inspire others, both Maori and non-Maori, to investigate the issues that arise, and make changes where necessary, in order to benefit the future of Aotearoa New Zealand and of Maori-Pakeha relations both within and outside our museums.